
Issue Brief – Utah Electronic College

NUMBER USHE-10

SUMMARY

The Analyst recommends the elimination of the Utah Electronic College (UEC) to save \$535,700 in state funds. This recommendation comes in light of the declining enrollment in the UEC.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this recommendation is to eliminate this service which is assisting fewer students each year, in an effort to save state funding. The elimination would affect approximately 30 FTE students and four FTE employees.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The Utah Electronic College (UEC) is a consortium of Utah community and state colleges working to make technology delivered courses and programs readily available to students in Utah and throughout the world. The Utah Electronic College's objective is: to assure that all residents of Utah, regardless of where they live or how complex their lives may be, can attain a degree through the UEC; offer all services needed by students taking technology delivered courses in a collaborative and unified manner so that students are effectively attending a single college; and eliminate the obstacles of high cost, loss of credit because of transfer problems, unavailability of classes when and where needed, and complicated administrative hurdles that usually occur if students attempt to take courses from different institutions and apply them toward a degree at another college.

However, the annualized FTE enrollment in the UEC has dropped consistently each year since 2002. The enrollment in 2006 was just 30 FTE. The FY 2007 budget for the UEC is \$734,500 with \$535,700 coming from state funds and \$198,800 coming from dedicated credits. At this level of funding and this FTE level, the state is providing nearly \$17,600 annually per FTE student. That level is more than double the average state funding per FTE at the most expensive USHE institution. It is 10% higher than the average cost per advanced graduate FTE student at the University of Utah and 46% higher than the average cost per advanced graduate FTE student at Utah State University.

Most of the USHE institutions provide online courses or other methods of instruction for their students. In view of the declining enrollment and the availability of courses through other means, the Analyst recommends that the Utah Electronic College be terminated. The resulting savings of \$535,700 could be redirected toward other priorities within Higher Education.

